Education
MANITOBA

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Safe Schools Initiative:
A Message from the Minister

Safety is central to the well being and development of Manitoba's students. Schools must be places that are free from dangerous behaviour and discipline problems that can interrupt learning.

Overall, Manitoba schools have been and continue to be safe places where children and young people can acquire the knowledge and skills essential to becoming effective, contributing members of society. Unfortunately, in this province, as elsewhere, schools are not always violence free. Manitoba Education and Youth is committed to ensuring that all students are provided with a safe, caring, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, and is taking important steps towards achieving that goal.

In March 2001, the Departments of Justice and Education and Youth made a commitment to provide funding and support for the establishment and ongoing activities of Safe Schools Manitoba, a partnership initiative to enhance student safety and address concerns such as violence, bullying, and gang activity in the school system. Safe Schools Manitoba includes representation from educators, students, parents, school trustees, school superintendents, police, and the government.

With the direction of Dr. Mary Hall, the Provincial Coordinator of Safe Schools Manitoba since January 2002, the organization has focused on facilitating information-sharing and awareness raising with respect to resources, best practices, and policies regarding school safety, including school codes of conduct, anti-bullying initiatives, conflict resolution, and violence prevention. In November 2002, it hosted a provincial youth conference on the theme of students' role in creating safe schools. The conference was well-attended by Middle and Senior Years students and educators from around the province.

More recently, in the fall 2002 Throne Speech, the government announced the introduction of new legislation that will work towards providing a safe and secure learning environment for Manitoba's children.

Safe Schools Manitoba

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I have already had some discussion with the major stakeholder organizations in this regard, and will continue the dialogue leading up to the introduction of the legislation.

Through collaboration and communication, we can all work towards creating a safe and caring school environment for our children and youth.

Honourable Ron Lemieux
Minister of Education and Youth

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Progress on Implementing the K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success

Implementation of the Kindergarten to Senior 4 (K-S4) Education Agenda for Student Success continues to be a focus for the Manitoba Department of Education and Youth. Over the past several months, steady progress has been made in putting the Agenda for Student Success into action. We are pleased to share a snapshot of some of these developments:

- Release of Education Agenda Document: Released in August 2002, *Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success, 2002-2006* identifies a set of priorities that the Department is working towards implementing, in collaboration with schools/divisions/districts. The document describes why the Agenda is important, what the current research tells us about student success, and how the Agenda was developed. It also identifies 27 actions that the Department has undertaken to promote student success. Copies of the document are available at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/agenda/>.
- Launch of Parent Information Website: A new website that informs parents and community members about what children learn in compulsory subject areas in Kindergarten to Grade 8 can be viewed at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/cur/parents/index.html>. A similar website for the Senior Years will be launched early in 2003. You can also obtain this information in print format by contacting Linda Palmi at 204-945-7967.
- Workshops to Facilitate School Planning: Regional workshops for *Outcomes Based Planning and Reporting in Education* have been conducted throughout Manitoba to assist schools/divisions/districts with using data for school planning.

Funding of Schools: Highlights

In January the Minister announced funding for public schools for 2003-2004 that includes:

- an overall funding increase of $23.8 million or 2.8%
- an Early Numeracy Initiative providing funding for programming for K-4 students
- an increase in funding in the areas of special needs, vocational technology, English as a Second Language (ESL), Aboriginal Academic Achievement (AAA), and Early Childhood Development
- additional Enrolment Change Support for school divisions/districts with decreasing enrolment.

A complete report can be viewed at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/finance/index.html>.

For updates on other initiatives contained in *Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success, 2002-2006*, visit our Agenda website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/agenda/>.

What's Happening With...

Arts Curriculum Renewal

Manitoba Education and Youth is taking preliminary steps in the process of renewing curricula for arts education. Typically, the Department's first stage of a curriculum project is to gather relevant research (e.g., curricula in other jurisdictions, new developments in learning theory or discipline content). A report summarizing the focus of arts curricula from Canadian provinces, as well as from several international jurisdictions, has been prepared.

At present, a group of Manitoba arts educators—with representation from the disciplines of visual art, arts as a whole, and drama—is reviewing the report, and is preparing a "vision" statement that will guide the next steps in curriculum renewal. Once this statement is drafted, various stakeholder groups from across Manitoba will be asked for feedback.

The Department is looking at several options to update curricula for the arts within a reasonable time frame and with available resources. These options include revising portions of the existing Manitoba curriculum and excerpting sections from documents produced in other jurisdictions that are congruent with our vision for arts education. Keep posted on our progress!

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Manitoba Education and Youth has undertaken several initiatives to help schools and teachers respond more effectively to the cultural and linguistic diversity that enriches us all and is so much a part of the fabric of our society. These initiatives are linked to the Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success.

ESL Program Review

Our schools reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity that has been and will continue to be an important aspect of our society. English as a Second Language (ESL) learners represent a significant and growing body of students in our schools. We know from experience and from decades of educational research that effective ESL programming is an essential aspect of providing appropriate and equitable programming for ESL learners.

In the 2001-2002 school year, Manitoba Education and Youth launched a comprehensive review of ESL programming in the province. The purpose of the review was to

- collect and analyze information on current ESL programming and the challenges experienced by schools and learners
- explore how the province could strengthen ESL programming through consultation and by drawing on research and experience in Canada and internationally
- provide recommendations that could form the basis for a departmental strategy and plan for strengthening ESL programming

A report, to be released in 2003, is expected to feature recommendations that will form the basis for a three-year plan of strengthening ESL programming and increasing our collective capacity to respond to the needs of ESL learners.

International and Heritage Languages

Manitoba Education and Youth recognizes the importance of international and heritage language education and the benefits of promoting linguistic diversity in today's global society. In collaboration with Alberta and Saskatchewan, Manitoba has led or participated in a number of Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) projects in support of international languages. The most recent projects, to be completed in the spring and fall of 2003, are:

- Ukrainian Language Arts curriculum framework and implementation documents (Kindergarten to Senior 4)
- Spanish Language and Culture curriculum framework and implementation documents (Grade 7 to Senior 4 and Senior 1 to Senior 4)
- German Language Arts curriculum framework document (Kindergarten to Senior 4)

We expect to continue collaborating with our partners in other international language projects in the future.

An Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity

In 1992, Manitoba Education and Youth released *Multicultural Education: A Policy for the 1990s*, the first policy document to outline the Department's understanding of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity in Canadian society. While this document has guided our work in creating more culturally inclusive schools, there is a need to renew and re-energize our policies in this area.

To provide direction and focus for creating more inclusive schools and classrooms, the Department is developing an Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity. This action plan will complement the primary goal of the Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success, which is to improve the educational outcomes of all learners.

This initiative is a critical aspect of a broader commitment to embracing diversity and equity. We see the proposed Action Plan for Ethnocultural Equity as complementing other departmental and government initiatives, such as the Aboriginal Education and Training Framework, Special Education Review Initiative, Healthy Child, Early Literacy Intervention, Early Childhood Development, and Adult Literacy and Learning initiatives.

Basic French

Basic French In-service Sessions

Teachers can now search and register for Basic French in-service sessions in either French or English. Both the "Coup d'œil sur l'année" and "Year at a Glance" websites allow you to search and register for any session that Manitoba Education and Youth offers at various locations across Manitoba.

- To register in French, visit the "Coup d'œil sur l'année" website at <http://www.atelier.mb.ca>.
- To register in English, visit the "Year at a Glance" website at <http://www2.edu.gov.mb.ca/yag/>.

Information and Communication Technologies Integration in Basic French

Would you like to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) in your Basic French class?

All Senior 1 to Senior 4 Basic French teachers who would like to receive a copy of the draft version of the document *Se brancher en français : intégration des technologies de l'information et de communication* are asked to contact

Suzanne Châtelain
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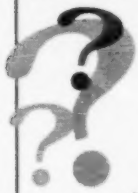
Toll free: 1-800-282-8069, ext. 8687

How Can We Help? Contact Us to Find Out



- Are you interested in integrating technology in your classroom and curriculum?
- Are your students motivated when they use technology to learn?
- Do you need support to apply technology to your professional practice?
- Would you like to participate in an online community of learners?

If your answer to these questions is "yes," then the Distance Learning and Information Technologies Unit (DLITU) in the Program Development Branch may be able to help you. DLITU is interested in working with all Manitoba educators.

Information and Communication Technologies

Our resources and services will enable you to integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) with promising instructional practice, adding value to your teaching, learning, and assessment. For example, we can help you develop professional learning plans to integrate ICT in the classroom and can provide guidance and resources to implement your plan. You can access online resources, such as Curriculum Navigator, to plan ICT-integrated learning experiences. We can also link you to opportunities that allow you and your students to create Grass Roots projects that bring funding and ICT skills and competencies into your classroom.

We are developing an online professional learning environment where you can access professional learning opportunities on a timely and flexible basis. We also provide web-based courses for students (see article on page 5), as well as print-based distance learning courses that teachers can use as resource packages in classroom instruction.

Contact DLITU

We are here to help you, and we encourage you to contact us at 204-945-8363 or dlitu@gov.mb.ca for more information and assistance.

To discover all the learning resources and opportunities available to Manitoba educators through DLITU, be sure to check out our website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/tech/index.html>.

UPCOMING EVENT

Science Summer Institute

Plan to take part in the third annual Science Summer Institute to be held July 2 to 5, 2003, at the University of Winnipeg. The Science Summer Institute is sponsored by Manitoba Education and Youth in partnership with the Science Teachers' Association of Manitoba (STAM) and the University of Winnipeg.

If you are new to science teaching, struggling to implement the new science curriculum, or simply looking for an opportunity for professional dialogue and rejuvenation, this is the professional development opportunity for you.

Here's what some of last year's participants had to say:

- "This was one of the best in-services I've attended! Lots of useful, practical handouts and ideas."
- "This was just what I needed. I feel I can organize and teach more effectively after this."
- "I liked talking to a presenter who has taught the material and could offer some tips for success."

This year's Science Summer Institute will include proven hits from last year—sessions dealing with unit planning, the design process, and specific clusters from the Kindergarten to Senior 2 science curriculum. In addition, the 2003 Science Summer Institute will offer sessions related to clusters not previously addressed, a new grade (Senior 3 Physics), and integration of science with other subject areas. Each session will be one or two days long.

Teacher-participants challenge during the Grade 8 to 9 design process activity at the 2002 Science Summer Institute.

Participants can attend as many of the one- or two-day sessions as they wish. Post-baccalaureate credit will be available to those who attend all four days. There is no cost for the Science Summer Institute.

For further details, look for the Science Summer Institute poster and registration forms in your school, consult the Manitoba Education and Youth Events Calendar at <http://www2.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/profdevcalendar/>, or visit the STAM website at <http://www.stam.mb.ca>.

Web-Based Courses

Anyplace, anytime learning is a reality in Manitoba for many Senior Years students and adult learners. This flexible, modern way of learning is made possible by accessing courses via the World Wide Web. Typically, a teacher in a school teaches a virtual class consisting of students in several other schools—often in other towns. With web-based courses, teachers and students are able to access course materials and communicate with one another at times that fit their schedules from any convenient location.

When asked about their experience in teaching web-based courses, teachers typically comment that they "enjoyed the adventure of trying something new. There were no discipline/class control problems." Many students indicate that they "liked the control they had over their own time management."

Course Development and Delivery

Manitoba Education and Youth is partnering with schools/divisions/districts to foster online learning in Manitoba. The Department collaborates with partners in developing web-based courses, provides the software licence, sets up and hosts courses, and provides training for online teachers. Courses are available free of charge to schools/divisions/districts wishing to enroll students and teach web-based courses.

The availability of web-based courses makes it possible for schools/divisions/districts to offer courses to students who would otherwise not be able to take them because of scheduling or low enrollment issues. Students can remain in their local school and have access to courses from other locations without travelling.

The Department's policy on distance learning courses is available online at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/docs/policy/online_learning>.

Courses Available

Web-based courses are offered in a variety of subject areas. Currently, 19 courses have been completed, and eight additional courses are in development. The table below lists Senior Years courses now available.

To view examples of web-based courses or to obtain more information about course development, please visit the Department's website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/tech/wbc/index.html>.

Manitoba Education and Youth also maintains a website that lists web-based courses being taught in Manitoba. To view the list, refer to <http://www3.edu.gov.mb.ca/dlc/index.jsp>.

Web-Based Courses Currently Available

Senior 1
Science (10F)
Senior 2
Geography (20G)
Applied Mathematics (20S)
Senior 3
Canadian History (30S)
Applied Mathematics (30S)
Pre-Calculus Mathematics (30S)
English Language Arts: Transactional Focus (30S)
English Language Arts: Literary Focus (30S)
Computer Science (30S)
Software Applications (30S)
Senior 4
Chemistry (40S)
Biology (40S)
World Issues (40S)
Applied Mathematics (40S)
Pre-Calculus Mathematics (40S)
English Language Arts: Transactional Focus (40S)
English Language Arts: Comprehensive Focus (40S)
Computer Science (40S)
Law (40S)

System Requirements

To access web-based courses, students require Internet access, a Pentium class computer, and Internet Explorer 5 or newer. Many courses also require students to have access to an office suite such as Microsoft Office. Certain courses require additional software.

Online Communication

All web-based courses are designed as teacher-mediated courses. Email and discussion boards are important communication tools used in web-based courses to allow students to communicate with the teacher and with each other. High importance is placed on development of community within web-based courses.

"I was surprised at how well I got to know the students, even though I never saw any of them" is a comment many teachers make when asked about their experience teaching online. Initially, there are many misgivings about whether students and teachers will get to know each other, but these soon disappear as teachers and students begin to work in the course environment.

Additional Information

Requests for course set-up or additional course delivery information can be directed to 1-800-465-9915.

For information about web-based course development, please contact the Distance Learning and Information Technologies Unit (DLITU) by email at dlitu@gov.mb.ca or by telephone at 204-945-8463.

Distance Learning and Information Technologies Unit (DLITU)
<http://www3.edu.gov.mb.ca/dlc/index.jsp/>

The Student Services Grant Pilot Project

Seven school divisions/districts are currently working in partnership with Manitoba Education and Youth to pilot a new method of providing supports for students with diverse needs. During the 2002-2004 school years, the pilot school divisions/districts will work closely with the Province to implement a new funding method, to adopt new proactive approaches to behaviour, and to develop a plan for student services.

Why was the pilot project initiated?

The *Manitoba Special Education Review: Final Report* (1999) identified the need to review the existing model of funding students with special needs due to a number of concerns, especially regarding students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The recommendations of the Review were made in response to concerns raised by school personnel and parents.

The Review recommended that the Special Needs categorical support Levels I, II, and III be redefined to focus on student needs. The need to improve outcomes for students experiencing emotional and behavioural disorders was stressed. The funding issues to be addressed from the Review include

- further decreasing the focus on disability labels (60)
- maintaining equity as "a primary focus of any revisions to the funding model and accompanying funding formulas for special education" (59)
- having equity and provincial support targets "coupled with expectations of minimum service standards and appropriate accountability processes" (59)
- having "para-professionals support programming goals, rather than para-professionals being viewed as the sole support for students with exceptionalities" (50)
- adjusting the Financial Reporting and Accounting in Manitoba Education (FRAME) system "to capture more discrete financial information" (55)
- "retaining a model based on some degree of provincial divisional/district partnership" (59)

How will the pilot school divisions/districts do things differently?

To address the concerns raised in the Special Education Review, a Student Services Grant pilot project was established. Seven school divisions/districts volunteered to pilot the use of a Student Services Grant to replace the following funding sources:

- Special Needs categorical support—Level I
- Students at Risk Support Program (Formula Grant portion)
- Early Behaviour Intervention Initiative
- Special Needs categorical support—Level II (category of Emotional/Behavioural Disorders [EBD])

Because the various grants are combined into one Student Services Grant, the pilot school divisions/districts will have greater flexibility in deciding how to spend their funding. This flexibility should allow for improvements in programming and in matching services to local needs.

The Student Services Grant encourages school divisions/districts to focus on student needs while alleviating the requirement to submit student-specific EBD funding applications. It is hoped that this will reduce the tendency to label students negatively and allow staff additional time to work on programming.

The latest educational research into promising practices suggests that students with behavioural concerns can often be dealt with through global interventions, which include school-wide rules, positive and caring classroom climates, and instruction in social skills.

With the Student Services Grant, school divisions/districts have the opportunity to build proactive and preventative programming to address behavioural issues. Building on best practices research, the pilot project allows for the creation of a school-wide approach to behaviour that includes

- school-wide codes of conduct, developed with student and community input
- classroom planning for positive social climates
- instruction in appropriate social behaviours for all students
- instruction in social skills for students who require it
- availability of a continuum of supports for all students experiencing difficulties
- improved diagnosis of conditions that have an impact on behaviour
- specialized services for students with more severe behaviour problems
- less reliance on the use of para-professionals to manage individual behaviour
- appropriate individualized service where required

Data will be collected and used to develop a student services component of the school plan. This should lead to an increase in evidence based decisions being made about students and their programming needs and result in a student services plan.

How will the pilot project be evaluated?

An evaluation process, which is currently being developed, will examine the effects of the Student Services Grant pilot project on student outcomes and on the use of funding. The evaluation will include the collection of quantitative data, financial accountability for the Student Support Grant, and surveys and interviews of administrators, staff, parents, and students. By the spring of 2004, a final report on the project will be released.

Strobe Lights on School Buses

You may have noticed that some Manitoba school buses are now equipped with a white flashing strobe light on the roof.

A two-year strobe light pilot project was initiated in the fall of 1999. School divisions were invited to participate by installing strobe lights on six units in their respective school bus fleets. Two hundred twenty-one school buses operating in 39 school divisions participated in the pilot. During the pilot, school bus drivers were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the pros and cons of strobe lights. The results of the questionnaire, as well as comments provided by the general public and school division officials, concluded that strobe lights do increase the visibility of a school bus. Better visibility improves school bus safety.

In view of this positive reaction to strobe lights on school buses, Manitoba Transportation and Government Services invited school divisions to apply for a strobe light blanket permit that allows them to equip as many of their school bus units with strobe lights as appropriate. As of November 2002, 32 school divisions and one school bus contractor were issued blanket strobe light permits.

The blanket permits will certainly increase the number of buses equipped with strobe lights in the province over the next school year. It is anticipated that strobe light use will again be evaluated and assessed in June 2003.

Assessment and Evaluation

Grade 3 Assessment in Reading and Numeracy

From September to November 2002, Grade 3 teachers gathered assessment information on students with regard to critical competencies in reading and numeracy. School divisions/districts have summarized their results and have forwarded this information to Manitoba Education and Youth. In the spring of 2003, the Department will release a report on provincial results, based on the data received from school divisions/districts. This information will be available online at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/assess/publications.html>.

Provincial Standards Testing

The test administration dates for the second semester of the 2002-2003 school year are as follows:

Provincial Standards Tests for Second Semester 2002-2003	Dates
• Grade 6 English Language Arts (Optional)	June 3 to 5, 2003
• Senior 1 Mathematics/Mathématiques 1(M) (Optional)	June 11, 2003
• Senior 4 Applied Mathematics/Mathématiques appliquées 40S	June 11 and 12, 2003
• Senior 3 Consumer Mathematics/Mathématiques de consommation 30S (written test portion)	June 9, 2003
• Senior 4 Pre-Calculus/Mathématiques pré-calcul 40S	June 10, 2003
• Senior 4 English Language Arts	May 20 to 23, 2003

Information about the Provincial Assessment Program and copies of the *Information Bulletin, Policy and Procedures for Standards Tests*, and marker recruitment forms can be found at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k4/assess/publications.html>.

International Testing

A random sample of 15-year old students from across Manitoba will participate in the second administration of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the spring (mid April to mid May) of 2003. This year the major emphasis of the assessment is on mathematics, with minor emphasis on reading and science.

Policy Handbook Update

The Department is revising the document *Reporting on Student Progress and Achievement: A Policy Handbook for Teachers, Administrators, and Parents*. The new version, entitled *Fair Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting of Student Progress and Achievement: A Policy Handbook for Schools*, will be available online in the spring of 2003.

Breaking the Stereotype of Students at Risk: Our Story of Success

By Trevor Reid and Blaine Kappenstein

Students come to school facing a variety of problems and issues that interfere with their learning and put them at risk of not succeeding. Risk factors affect students socially, emotionally, and physically, and can include exposure to drugs and alcohol, pressure to join a gang, or neglect or abuse at home. Too often, however, the "at risk" label comes with the stereotype "can't learn."

At Grand Rapids School we have many students who, because of their life circumstances, are at risk of not succeeding in school. In the past we found ourselves responding to students' needs in a reactive way, filling our days by running from problem to problem, and we found that the same problems kept arising time and again. Bullying and a high dropout rate were annual concerns at our school.

We decided to change our approach to be proactive and to focus almost all our efforts into one area: building students' self-esteem. Our hope was that if students felt good about themselves, perhaps some school issues would take care of themselves. To make a long story short, our approach worked.

Through a renewed commitment to the arts, Grand Rapids School has created an environment that fosters positive self-expression for individuals. The culturally relevant fiddle program, choir, modern dance club, and week-long graphic arts workshops focus on providing opportunities for student success in previously neglected areas.

In the area of academics, our school has made a commitment to foster student individuality and success in learning. We have given priority to differentiated instruction, ensuring developmentally appropriate work for students. Increased flexibility in graduation requirements and implementation of school-initiated courses (SICs) tailored to meet local educational needs and raise student interest have helped to strengthen student ownership of their education.

We have also given attention to school pride, regularly conducting anti-vandalism and anti-graffiti campaigns, decorating the halls with thematic murals in keeping with Grand Rapids culture, and having students take leadership in developing and selecting a new logo for the school. Students are becoming more responsible for their physical environment.

While there are no definitive solutions to the problems encountered at Grand Rapids School, many situations have improved. Most significantly, the high school dropout rate has decreased from an annual average of 45 percent to under 17 percent over each of the last three semesters.

Although we cannot remove many of the factors that put our students at risk, we can take steps to develop our students' resiliency. As educators we are responsible to provide useful strategies for students to experience success in their education. The foundation for this, of course, is the acknowledgement that all our students, even those who are at risk, can learn and succeed.

(Photograph © Trevor Reid. All rights reserved.)

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Some images © 2002-2003 www.clipart.com.

The newsletter includes articles from the education community and from Manitoba Education and Youth. Signed articles appearing in this magazine express the views of their authors and not necessarily those of the Department.

Distribution:

Education Manitoba is distributed free to schools in Manitoba. This newsletter can be viewed online at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/newsletter/2002/>.

A similar document has been developed by the Bureau de l'éducation française Division for the Français and the French Immersion Programs.

Contact Information:

We invite contributions to *Education Manitoba*. When forwarding submissions, please include your name and telephone number, and send materials in print and electronic formats to:

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We also want to hear what you think about our newsletter. Please send your comments, ideas, and suggestions to the address specified above.

Manitoba
Building for the Future